A

SERMON

Preached at

St. *EDMUNDS BURY*,

Before the Right Reverend Father in God

WILLIAM,

Lord Biſhop of *NORWICH*.

At the Second Seſſion of his Lordſhips Primary Viſitation.

Holden there on *Tueſday*, *May* 4. 1686.

BY

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Jo. Battely RR^mo Patri ac
D^no D^no Wilhelmo Archiep.
Cantuar. a ſacris domeſticis.

TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God

WILLIAM,

Lord Biſhop of *NORWICH.*

My Lord,

THis Sermon was thought by your Lordſhip to ſpeak an honeſt deſign in the Preacher; and ſince you were ſo well pleaſed with it, for bearing ſuch a Character, that you would take no notice of its Defects in other things, I have reaſon to hope for the ſame Candor from all other Perſons of True Judgement and Worth. The Diſcourſe was wholly addreſſed to the Clergy, and yet cloathed with nothing but plainneſs and ſimplicity of ſpeaking;

ſpeaking; which always makes moſt for the profit of the Hearer, and never more for the Credit of the Preacher, then when he ſpeaks to the beſt Judges, who never value Sermons for being Adorned with Wit and Fancy.

My Lord, I endeavour'd to make my ſelf, and ſuch of the Clergy as I am, ſenſible how we ought to behave our ſelves in the Houſe of God. *And becauſe, in purſuance of the ſame end, your Lordſhip hath recommended this Sermon to the Preſs, I have adventur'd to make it yet more public, by putting it under your Patronage.*

I am

Your Lordſhips moſt Obedient

Son and Servant,

N. CLAGETT.

1 Tim. iv. 15.

Ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι.

Give thy ſelf wholly to them.

THE words are part of St. *Paul*'s inſtruction to *Timothy* concerning the right diſcharge of his duty in his Miniſterial and Epiſcopal Function.

Three Epiſtles of this ſort, remaining in our Canon, did St. *Paul* write; two to *Timothy*, and one to *Titus*, who were both early converted by him to Chriſtianity, and taken to his aſſiſtance in the work of the Miniſtry, and were at length conſtituted Biſhops, the One of *Epheſus*, the other of *Crete*: For the Holy Ghoſt moved him to write to theſe Perſons in their abſence, Epiſtles of exhortation; and the Providence of God took care to have them preſerved, when written, that they might be a ſtanding Rule to the Chriſtian Clergy, in all Ages of the Church; There are indeed ſeveral inſtructions of this kind intermixt here and there in other parts of the Scripture; but theſe three Epiſtles ſeem to have been written more on purpoſe for the direction of the Clergy, and accordingly they are put together in the Canon of the New Teſtament.

Now St. *Paul* in teaching *Timothy* and *Titus* how they ought to behave themſelves in their Office, gives them inſtructions of two ſorts, to wit, ſuch as reſpected their Epiſcopal Authority and Juriſdiction, as Thoſe about *Ordination*, *Ordering the Publick Aſſemblies*, *Cenſuring Hereticks*, *Falſe Teachers*, *and Innovators in Doctrin*, and the like, and ſuch, wherein ſubordinate Miniſters are concerned with them: And I think, his Exhortations to *Timothy* in the latter part of the Chapter from the 13*th* verſe to the end, are of that kind; For here he ſtirs up *Timothy* to imploy himſelf in Reading and Preaching, to uſe and improve the Divine Gift that was in him, to make the concern of his Miniſtry the great matter of his thought and meditation, and to be careful of his Life and Doctrin.

And then, the Text is one of thoſe Precepts which are given to the whole Clergy: *Meditate upon theſe things*, *Give thy ſelf wholly to them.* For every Miniſter of Chriſt ſhould be diligent in his Sacred Calling, whether he be in quality of a Biſhop preſiding over the Presbyters, or Δευτέρᾳ θρόνῳ ἱερεύς, *a Prieſt of the ſecond Throne*, as a *Presbyter* was anciently called.

Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 10. c. 5.

Ἐν τούτοις, Be in them, *Totus in illis*; Give thy ſelf wholly, or *Give attendance to* theſe things, viz. *to Reading*, *to Exhortation*, *to Doctrin: He that teacheth*, *let him wait on teaching*; *He that exhorteth on exhortation*, are Precepts of the like nature: The Apoſtle bids *Timothy* lay out his Time and Pains in *Reading*, (*i. e.*) in ſtudying the Will of God himſelf, and in *Exhortation*, (*i. e.*) in Preaching

Rom. 12. 7, 8.

ing and applying it to others: But then we muſt note, that in theſe Miniſterial Duties of Private Studying, and both Publick and Private Exhortation, to which he would have *Timothy* give himſelf, he includes all other Epiſcopal and Miniſterial Offices whatſoever, which are neceſſary for the Edification of the Church, and the good of Souls, according to thoſe ſundry precepts and directions which he elſewhere gives him in the two Epiſtles.

Indeed the Preaching part was the great work of the Miniſtry in the firſt Age of the Goſpel, becauſe then Infidels were to be converted to the Faith, and Believers to be *daily added to the Church*; and this took up ſo much of their Time, who were the firſt planters of Chriſtianity, that they were fain to lay aſide one work they had taken upon them, and to commit it to Others: The Apoſtles left off the buſineſs of *caring for the poor*, that they might *give themſelves continually to Prayer, and the Miniſtry of the Word*; and hence was the inſti- Acts 6. 4.
tution of the Office and Order of *Deacons*.

But whereas the perſon exhorted in this Chapter to give himſelf to Study and Preaching, was, *Timothy*, who had a newly planted Church to overſee and govern, and to preſerve from Hereſie and Schiſm, the (ταῦτα) here in the Text, I conceive is to be taken more at large, as comprehending all parts of the Miniſtry that belonged to him, and the whole Duty of his Place and Function.

And now I ſhall conſider theſe words to *Timothy* as a precept of inſtruction to us all, who are of the Sacred Order; and that which we are to learn

From hence, and apply to our ſelves, is this, That *we ought to make that, which is the Duty of our Calling, the great buſineſs of our Lives, ſerving truly and painfully in our places to the Glory of God, and to the edifying of the People committed to our charge; and doing whatſoever we do, with all our might.*

This I have choſen to be my preſent ſubject of Diſcourſe.

In the handling whereof, according to the moſt eaſie and natural method, theſe two things are to be done,

Firſt, I am to ſhew what this Apoſtolical Canon forbids in Church-men, or thoſe who miniſter in Religion.

Secondly, To uſe ſome perſuaſive Arguments and Motives to that induſtry in the work of the Miniſtry, which it requires.

And what I deſign herein (my Brethren of the Clergy) is to excite and quicken you and my ſelf to that Diligence, which is requiſite in our Function, according to the Rule of the Text, the expectation of our *Dioceſan*, and the reaſon of the thing.

I begin firſt with obſerving to You, that there are two things which the Apoſtle here diſlikes and condemns, as not becoming the Holy Function, *viz. Sloth in the Miniſtry*, and *worldly-mindedneſs in them who undertake it.* The Miniſter of *Chriſt* is to be neither *Sluggard* nor *Worldling*, he muſt give himſelf wholly to his Sacred work, which he cannot do, if he either loyters and is careleſs in his Spiritual Office, or goes after this World, and drives on quite another deſign.

1. The

1. The Apoſtle is againſt *Slothfulneſs in the work of the Miniſtry*, as appears alſo from ſuch other Exhortatious of his to *Timothy*, parallel to the Text, as theſe, *Preach the Word, Be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon*; for ſo he charges him, *Watch thou in all things, endure hardneſs*, and the like. The very word Διάκονος, *Miniſter*, which is a Title common to all the Orders and Ranks of Eccleſiaſtical Men, Biſhops, Prieſts and Deacons, ſignifies a painful ſervice, like that of Men, who travail in haſte, and raiſe the * duſt as they go; for ſo the word ſeems to ſignifie. The Apoſtle exhorts even Chriſtians of the Laity to be diligent for God in their ſphere and capacity; as the *Romans*, that they would not *be ſlothful in buſineſs, but fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord*, and the *Corinthians*, that they would *abound in the work of the Lord*. All *Chriſtians* of this Church do pray in the *General Thankſgiving* in the Liturgy, That God would give them Grace to expreſs and ſhew forth their thankfulneſs for all his benefits and bleſſings, *by giving up themſelves to his Service*; Much more then ſhould they be Zealous and Active in their Duty, who are ſet apart for the ſervice of Religion, and for miniſtring in Holy things. And very well might exhortations to diligence in the work of the Goſpel come from ſuch a Perſon, who was himſelf a very laborious Apoſtle, and an eminent example of induſtry in the ſacred Service of the Miniſtry, and ſpent in his ſtrength in that Service; For *he ceaſed not to to warn people night and day*; *Having received this Miniſtry* (ſays he) *we faint not*; and he ſpeaks thus to the *Corinthians* from his Soul, *I will gladly ſpend*

* Κονία.

Rom. 12. 11. 1 Cor. 15. 28.

Acts 20. 31.

2 Cor. 4. 1.

ch. 12. 15.

ſpend and be ſpent for your ſake: A Goſpel Miniſter in his Office being in this like a *Candle on a Candle-ſtick*, that he waſtes himſelf, whileſt he affords Light to others; which was thought a matter of no ſmall commendation by that active *German* Prince, who cauſed a burning Lamp to be ſtamped on his Coin, with the firſt four Letters of theſe words upon it, *Aliis Serviens Meipſum Contero, By giving Light to others I conſume my ſelf.* And truly, Whoever takes upon him the Profeſſion of a Miniſter with due ſincerity, will ſoon find that there is work enough in it to take up his Time and Care, and engage his Diligence, and to make him ever wakeful and ſtirring. But to enter upon the Miniſtry only as a Profeſſion or Condition of Life, one can live in handſomely and conveniently, and there's all; to chooſe a painful Calling for to live at eaſe, and a work of labour to do nothing, to mind nothing leſs than the great concern of the Function: to ſit down ſluggiſhly and unprofitably *under the Vines*, and *under the Fig-trees* of the Church, to live upon the *Fat* and *Wool* of the *Flock*, without caring any farther; to love the ſecular Eſtate and Revenue of an Eccleſiaſtical Charge, and not the Spiritual work that belongs to it, to make even the *Vineyard* it ſelf a Sanctuary for Idleneſs, is quite and clean contrary to the exhortation of the Text.

Rerum Germ. Scriptores.

2. *Worldly-mindedneſs* is the other thing which this Rule of Scripture forbids to the Paſtors and Guides of the Church, becauſe it cannot conſiſt with a ſufficient attendance to the Miniſtry. If the firſt *Chriſtian* Paſtors left even part of their buſi-

neſs

neſs to the care of others, that they might give themſelves the more entirely to the reſt of it that was moſt neceſſary, it is fit certainly we ſhould lay aſide the World, and withdraw our ſelves from Secular Affairs as much as we can, that we might the more fully intend the work of our proper Calling. Indeed St. *Paul* and *Timothy* were not in circumſtances, that much tempted them to be Worldlings; For in their time, when Governments were not as yet *Chriſtian*, there were no Eſtates legally ſetled for the Maintenance of the Clergy: Nay, our Apoſtle, that he might not be chargeable, even to them from whom he deſerved well for his Miniſterial Labours amongſt them, *wrought with his own hands* for a ſubſiſtence. But the work of the Miniſtry hath Temporal encouragements now, which thoſe of us do find no ſmall temptations to ſeek this World too much, who are not as Spiritual in Mind and Heart, as we are in Profeſſion.

Now the ſame St. *Paul* who here exhorts *Timothy* to give himſelf to the Miniſtry, blamed *Demas* for neglecting it out of *love to this preſent World*: 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. Not, that I think the *love of the World*, which he did not like in *Demas*, was that ſinful love of it, which the Goſpel every where condemns; but it was however, ſuch an undue carefulneſs about it, as was not proper for a Miniſter, though in others it might be more allowable, an exceſs of concern in Worldly negotiations not becoming the Miniſtry, which requires us to be converſant with things of another nature. But ſtill it would be worſe in us, to be taken off from the Miniſtry by

ſuch

ſuch a Worldly Spirit, as is Criminal even in Laymen; we cannot make a buſineſs of two things, widely different from each other; we cannot act as we ſhould do according to our Profeſſion to be Spiritual Perſons, and yet be mere Seculars in our thoughts and cares: no man whatſoever *can ſerve two Maſters, God and Mammon*, much leſs I am ſure can we, who are leſs at leiſure for ſuch a double Service, being more ſeparate from the World, and ſet apart for ſacred Adminiſtrations: Therefore St. *Paul* Cautions *Timothy* againſt Covetouſneſs, and the love of the World in particular, as what with its evil fruits and effects would be a great hindrance to him in the work of the Miniſtry, *But thou, O man of God, flee theſe things:* thou, that art devoted to ſo excellent a Service.

1 Tim. 6. 11.

The truth is, if we, who are the more peculiar Lot of God, are more given to the World than to the buſineſs of miniſtring for him, it may well be ſuſpected concerning us, That we did not intend honeſtly and worthily at firſt; That we betook our ſelves to the Sacred Calling chiefly for outward Motives; and that the World was the great incentive to the work, as moſtly it is, I ſuppoſe, when the *Cure* is *purchaſed with Money.*

Time was, when by an Hand of Authority, *the Buyers and Sellers were driven out of the Temple*; and if they had been kept out from thence ever ſince, and there had been no Secular Trading or Merchandize in Eccleſiaſtical concerns, it had been better for the Church: and I wiſh heartily it were not in the power of any perſons unworthily to betray the Church and Men's Souls, by making money

of

of Preſentations, and ſelling Spiritual Charges to them that will give moſt for them: For when they are bought as Eſtates to live on, we come to them as *Beneſices* more then as *Cures*. Such beginnings in the Miniſtry any where, as are from a *round ſum*, do not promiſe diligence in the work. When the World enters us upon our places, in all likelihood it proves the main moving and governing Principle, from whence we act all along in them, and we are apt to be ſuch, who *ſerve not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but our own belly.*

It is indeed very allowable in us to have regard to our temporal Support, and we ſhould take care for the defending and preſerving our rights; and we may lawfully enough embrace greater worldly advantages, when what we mean hereby is, that we might be enabled to do God the more Service in the World; but whileſt we propound to our ſelves and conjoin the leſſer end, that is Temporal, does it appear to us that we are ſincere in the Miniſtry by our diligence in it according to the Text, and do we diſcharge our duty in our Function ſo carefully and painfully, that we can be able to ſay, every one of us to our Flocks with the teſtimony of our Conſciences, what St. *Paul* did to the *Corinthians*, οὐ ζητῶ τὰ ὑμῶν ἀλλ' ὑμᾶς, *I ſeek not yours but you?* 2 Cor. 12. 14.

It was St. *Peter*'s exhortation to the Elders or Biſhops of the Church, and in them to all Miniſters, That they would *feed the flock of God amongſt them, taking the overſight thereof, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*; a mind ready and willing for the work, [προθύμως:] and thus he exhorted the Pa- 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2.

ſtors of God's Flock at a time, when the Maintenance of the Clergy was nothing neer ſo conſiderable as it has been ſince, upon which account this Canon of St. *Peter* may ſeem to have had an aſpect chiefly towards thoſe Ages of the Church that were to come, wherein the *Spiritual Men* would be under a far greater temptation *to mind earthly things*. Not, that 'tis unlawful in undertaking the Miniſtry to aim at ſecular intereſt, and the advantages of this Life; but to make this World our main end and deſign, is what the Text, and the now mention'd place of St. *Peter* do diſallow, becauſe if this be the thing we propound chiefly, we ſhall certainly act accordingly, and conſequently cannot be ſo intent upon our ſpiritual concern, or, ſo ready and diligent in the work of the Miniſtry as we ought, but ſhall be called off from it, not a little.

But let me add, That if we neglect our work, becauſe we have buſineſs of another nature in hand, and our hearts go after this preſent World; and peradventure what we do in the mean while be more by *conſtraint* than *willingly*, (which St. *Peter* doth not like in Miniſters) then *we have our reward*, and muſt expect no more for our ſerving by the halves in our places, than what we propounded to our ſelves thereby.

Thus I have ſhown what the Apoſtle by this his precept to *Timothy*, condemns in the Men of our Profeſſion. When we do not give our ſelves to the work of the Sacred Miniſtry, we are guilty of negligence in our Office, either through lazineſs, or elſe becauſe we are otherways taken up, and our thoughts, and Time, and Care, are engaged in ſecular

cular things. Wherefore it follows, that we are not ſuch, as the Apoſtle would have us, and all Goſpel-Paſtors to be, if we be either ſlothful in the Miniſterial Service, or Earthly-minded-men, and have our diligence employed in too eager a purſuit of this preſent world.

Having now conſidered the Oppoſites to that diligence in the Holy Function which the Apoſtle requires,

Secondly, I proceed to the other part of my diſcourſe, which ſhall be a Perſuaſive to ſuch a Diligence.

Whereas it has pleaſed God to preſerve the fear of his name in the World, and to bring Men to Salvation by the Miniſtry of Men, not by that of Angels, or by ſpeaking to us immediately himſelf, he has ſelected and ſet apart an Order of Men for that Service, that ſhould Miniſter to him for the People, and inſtruct and guide the people in his Name, and by his Authority. As *Barnabas* and *Paul* were *ſeparated by the Holy Ghoſt*, even from other *Prophets and Teachers*, for the great work whereunto he had called them in particular, which was to go about preaching *Chriſt* publickly in ſeveral Countries of the World; ſo are Miniſters in general ſeparated by *Chriſt* to the ſacred Service. For our Lord *gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt*, Eph. 4. 11, 12. Here is a ſelecting of Perſons, and here's their work.

Acts 13. 2.

Quemadmodum in veteri Teſtamento ex ſuo populo ſublegit ſibi Dominus filios Levi, qui ſpecialiter ſibi in Miniſteriis Tabernaculi ſervirent, ſic ſimili modo in Novo Teſtamento ex populo Chriſtiano ſublecti ſunt Clerici & Sacerdotes, ut illi ſpecialiter Domino ſervirent. Auguſt. Tom. 8. p. 7.

Now ſince God has called us from the reſt of Men to the peculiar Service of Himſelf, he meant and intended that we ſhould be wholly in that Service, to which we are ſeparated. We are not called to the Miniſtry barely to be authorized and commiſſioned for peculiar Church Offices, but alſo to be Men making a buſineſs of the more immediate Service of God; We are an Order of Men diſtinct from the *Laity*, not only as we are qualified and enabled for the Adminiſtration of Gods holy Word and Sacraments, and other Ordinances, but alſo as we are ſelect Perſons, whom God has appointed to addict our ſelves altogether to that work and office, wherein Lay-perſons in part, and upon occaſion, may and ought to miniſter to one another; For inſtance, All Chriſtians ſhould *exhort one another daily*, and inſtruct and reprove each other, as they ſhall be able, and according to the Opportunities they have; but this is the Miniſters work more eſpecially, to which he is ſeparated and devoted.

And indeed unleſs our diligence in the work of our function bears ſome proportion to the deſign of our Call to it, which is, that we might give our ſelves wholly thereunto, with what ſatisfaction can we wear the diſtinguiſhing Habit? How can we judge of our ſelves that we are ſincere in our Calling? or ſay with the Apoſtle, *This is our rejoycing, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in ſimplicity and Godly ſincerity, not in fleſhly Wiſdom, we have our Converſation in the world*; and towards them eſpecially, whom we are *over in the Lord?*

Had St. *Paul* and *Timothy* lived in Times, when the Clergy of the Church were taken care for by the

the Laws of the Government, no doubt he would have been more earneſt with *Timothy* to follow his Miniſtry cloſe. As for St. *Paul*, in the time and work of his Apoſtleſhip, he had many times a ſubſiſtence to ſeek, and *Timothy* had no Legal *Benefice* annexed to his *Office* or Cure in Spirituals. Had it been ſo, St. *Paul* would have been much more urgent upon him, ἐν τούτοις εἶναι; How then ſhould we apply to our ſelves this his Apoſtolique Exhortation to *Timothy*; we who have Maintenances Legally ſecured? Should not we make it our buſineſs in our Miniſterial Calling to *ſeek the Kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs thereof*, ſeeing *other things are added to us*, and we ſtand obliged to lay out our utmoſt endeavours, not only in Duty to God, but in Juſtice to Man.

And this advantage we have above men of other Profeſſions, That all the buſineſs we have to do is of the ſame nature and kind. In other Profeſſions of Life, Men have their general and particular Calling; and their Concerns in the latter prove often-times great Avocations from, and hindrances to their Care in the former: But our general and particular Calling is in a manner one and the ſame thing. Religion and God's Glory is the great buſineſs of our Function; and it is the ſum of our Miniſtry to *ſave our ſelves and them that hear us.*

Now to perſuade diligence in the Sacred Calling in purſuance to this precept Apoſtolical, I ſhall uſe the ſeveral motives and arguments following, which are all plain and preſſing reaſons for it, As

1. *The important end of our Work.*
2. *The nature of our Work it ſelf.*

3. *The*

3. *The oppoſition we meet withal herein*, and conſequently the danger our Flocks are in, unleſs we uſe a due diligence in our Function.
4. *The fair likelyhood of ſucceſs in our Miniſtry*, if we give our ſelves to it with our whole Care.
5. *The dignity of our Work and Calling, in reſpect of the relation wherein we ſtand to God.*
6. *The great account we muſt one day make to him. And,*
7. *The glorious reward we ſhall receive from him if we have been diligent in his Service.*

And in offering theſe things to your thoughts (my Reverend Brethren) I am more ſenſible of my Auditory, than to propound them as new to you, and what you have not had in conſideration before; But however theſe ſundry motives laid all together, and jointly conſidered, may have a new force with us, to *confirm* us all in that holy Zeal for God, and diligence in our Miniſterial Duty, which is meet; to confirm us, I had rather ſay, than to *induce* any of us thereto.

And in the mean while, whereas in the common Religious Aſſemblies many things are loſt, which are delivered from the Pulpit, having little or no influence upon them to whom our Doctrines are directed, it is the preſent ſatisfaction of the Preacher, that in this ſo Grave, and Pious, and Judicious an Audience, though what is delivered be but mean, yet it is attended to, and received as it ought to to be: For none are ſo perſuadable by the Meditations and Arguings of others, as thoſe who are men of Meditation themſelves: Teachers are the moſt tractable, and Preachers, the beſt Hearers.

The

The firſt reaſon for giving attendance to the Miniſtry, is taken from the conſideration of the *end of our Work and Office*, which is no leſs grand and important, than *God's Glory in the Salvation of Men's Souls*. An end of the greateſt moment and conſequence, challenges our utmoſt care and pains in the purſuit of it, and ſuch an end is the *Saving Souls*, which is the end of our Miniſtry. But I think I need not inſiſt largely upon the ordinary Topick of Perſuaſion to diligence in the Paſtoral Function, from the *worth of a Soul*, as it was created for Immortality, and ſubſiſts eternally in happineſs or miſery after this Life, and is repreſented by our Saviour as infinitely more *worth the ſaving*, than this whole *World is the gaining*. *Matth.* 16, 26.

Only for the heightning our eſtimation of mens Souls, give me leave to note to you the value of them in God's account: For our Pariſhes and Charges, where we are Miniſters, are called in Scripture *God's Flock* and *Heritage*, *his Family* and *Houſhold*, as alſo the *Harveſt of the Lord*, into which we are *ſent as Labourers*, when we are ordained and miſſioned to ſerve any where, for the ſpiritual benefit of people; from which Scriptural Terms importing an eſteem of, and tenderneſs towards the Souls of our Pariſhioners, we may gather, that whilſt we indeed may be too indifferently concerned for them, they are precious to God, and dear in his Account; and ſo ſome Argument there is in this, that we ſhould be deeply concerned for the Souls that are under our Charge. But nothing methinks recommends the Souls of ſuch, as worthy our utmoſt care and regard, more, than what

1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. *Matth.* 24. 45. *Epheſ.* 2. 19. *Mat.* 9. 38.

what it coſt to redeem them; for ſeeing the Price was ſo great, ſhall we little regard the Purchaſe? Should they periſh through any negligence in us, for whom our Saviour has ſo wonderfully undertaken? Or ſhould we eaſily ſuffer them to be *deſtroyed, for whom Chriſt dyed?* This Argument the Apoſtle uſed to perſwade the *Aſian* Biſhops and Paſtors at *Miletus* to ſpare for no diligence in all Paſtoral Duties, *Take heed unto your ſelves, and to all the Flock, to feed the Church of God, which he has purchaſed with his own Blood.*

Acts 20. 28.

Now foraſmuch as our Places are *Cures of Souls*, and our work the Miniſtry of Souls, we ſhall certainly prefer the ſerving of their intereſt and welfare before our own eaſe, if we be what in all reaſon we ought, *viz. True lovers and valuers of the Souls of Men.*

Secondly, Such is the *nature of our work*, wherein we ſerve for the Salvation of Souls, that we ſhall find need enough of addicting our ſelves wholly to it, if we would do it thorougly; for it is a laborious office, and what requires a ſollicitous Care, and great attentiveneſs, and is ſuch a ſort of work, as may well engage our Thoughts, and employ our time: *Timothy* himſelf muſt ſtudy hard, who was a perſon ſo well qualifyed and enabled for the work of the Miniſtry by an extraordinary *Gift*: For he is exhorted by St. *Paul* in the Verſe foregoing, *Not to neglect the Gift that was in him*, and again, he was *put in remembrance* by him *to ſtir up the Gift of God in him*, and the Apoſtle would have him *ſtudy to ſhew himſelf approved unto God, a Workman that need not be aſhamed, rightly dividing the*

2 Tim. 1. 6.

2 Tim. 2. 15.

the Word of Truth: So that it ſeems even theſe firſt more eminent Gifts lay dead and uſeleſs by neglect, in caſe they were not exerciſed, and it was neceſſary, that they ſhould be exerted and improved by the diligence of thoſe, to whom they are given: much more needful in us is an aſſiduity of painful Study, who cannot pretend to that meaſure of Inſpiration, and to the extraordinary ability *Timothy* had, and to be gifted as he was; *How ſhall men preach except they be ſent*, ſays the Apoſtle, and how ſhall they inſtruct and exhort, *though they be ſent*, if there be no private diligence preparatory to the publick Miniſtration?

To be brief upon this argument; if it be conſidered, What care and painfulneſs is requiſite in ſtudying Divine Truth, that we might ſerve as we ought in the publick Miniſtries of Religion, and deſerve the Character given of thoſe in this Epiſtle, who are ſaid to be κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ, *Labourers in the Word and Doctrine:* What attendance in our private addreſſes and applications to Men; (for we are to watch over them in their ſeveral caſes and conditions, to free them of their errors, to recover them from their Vices, to ſatisfie their ſcruples, and remove their Prejudices, and to check the growth of pernicious perſuaſions; *to convince gain ſayers*, to regain the loſt, to bring home wanderers, to inſtruct all the ignorant, to hearten the fearful, and rouſe up the ſloathful, and and comfort the afflicted, to reconcile differing parties, to exhort and rebuke as there ſhall be need for it, to warn men ſeaſonably, and awaken their Conſciences, in the doing of which things by ch. 5. v. 17.

private ſolicitation we know St. *Paul* ſometimes *went from houſe to houſe*,) What may be expected from us in all Miniſterial Services according as the exigences of others, or the common Benefit of the Church may require, and in a careful management of our Paſtoral Charges, that *all things may be done to edifying*: And finally, I may add, What watchfulneſs is requiſite even over our own examples, that they may be as inſtructive as our Doctrins, and that our Lives may look as holy as our Callings, (*Take heed to thy ſelf*, as the Apoſtle goes on exhorting in the next verſe,) All this (I ſay) conſidered, it appears that St. *Auſtin* did not ſay altogether without reaſon, that no Office in humane Life hath more difficulty and labour in it, than that of the Clergy. When the Apoſtle had gloryed in the ſeveral hard things he had gone thorough; to theſe he adds a matter of boaſting as conſiderable as any, *viz.* the vaſt ſolicitude and buſineſs that was *daily upon him*, even *the care of all the Churches*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. For indeed he had a very large Province to inſpect and manage. St. *Chryſoſtom* thought that we of the Sacred Function take a Charge upon us, which would not feel light on the ſhoulders of Angels: So groſly miſtaken about the Miniſterial Calling, as well as ſilly, was that Abby Sluggard, who, as it is ſtoried, from *Prieſt* turned *Husbandmen*, becauſe he found it written, *In the ſweat of thy brow ſhalt thou eat thy bread*: For in Scripture compariſon the Miniſtry is *Harveſt Labouring*,

Acts 20. 20.

Ante omnia peto, ut cogitet religioſa prudentia Tua, nihil eſſe in hac vita facilius, lætius & hominibus acceptabilius Epiſcopi, Presbyteri, aut Diaconi Officio, ſi perfunctorie atque adulatorie res agatur, ſed nihil apud Deum miſerius & triſtius, & damnabilius; Ita nihil eſſe in hac vita difficilius, laboriоſius, periculoſius Epiſcopi, aut Presbyteri, aut Diaconi officio, ſed apud Deum nihil beatius, ſi eo modo militetur, quo noſter Imperator jubet. Dom. Patri Valerio. Auguſt. Tom. 2 p. 686.

bouring, and there is Sweat enough in it, as I conceive may be generally experienced, excepting where the *Cure* or the *Care* is very ſmall.

That diligence in the Miniſtry, which the nature of the Calling requires, and our Spiritual Father and Overſeer expects of us, is one thing, and that bare attendance in the Offices of it, which is but juſt legally neceſſary for the holding of our places, is another: They who are careful for nothing more, than to enlarge their Cures, and multiply their Charges, not being ſo much afraid of the greater duty incumbent, as deſirous of a larger Income, do commonly content themſelves only with the latter.

But it does not become us to ſlubber over our Sacred Work, as if we acted meerly by the meaſures of humane conſtraint, and for worldly ends. Againſt this, there are two Canons of the Apoſtle of the ſame nature with the Text, The one is a Precept to *Timothy*, viz. *Make full proof of thy Miniſtry*, the other to *Archippus* to the ſame effect; for the Laity of *Coloſs* were ordered by the Apoſtle to ſay to him, *Take heed to the Miniſtry which thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.* 2 Tim. 4. 5. Col. 4. 17.

Nay, my Brethren, when we do our utmoſt in the buſineſs of our Function, giving our ſelves wholly to it, well may we wiſh we could do more, ſince even our great Apoſtle himſelf could ſay, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?* 2 Cor. 2. 16.

A third Reaſon for making the Miniſterial Work our buſineſs, is *the Oppoſition we have in it. A great door and effectual is opened unto me*, ſays the Apoſtle, 1 Cor. 16. 9.

and there are many Adverſaries; he had a great deal of work before him to do, and good hopes of ſucceſs in it, but yet had many oppoſers to quell, which required his tarrying at *Epheſus*, and doubled his diligence in the work of his Apoſtleſhip: and we are not without Oppoſers in our Paſtoral Work. In this, the Devil is againſt us, who, as our Saviour gives us to underſtand, after we have
Math. 13. 19. have *ſown the ſeed in the Hearts* of our Hearers, doth what he can to take it away from thence again; and St. *Peter* acquaints us, that he is a diligent Adverſary to the work of ſaving Souls, for he repreſents him as *walking about like a roaring*
1 Pet. 5. 8. *Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour.* And therefore we are to be vigilant for our people, as they are to be for themſelves; we are not to ſit ſtill, but ſhould be active, and ſtirring for the defence of our Flocks.

There are alſo amongſt men adverſaries that oppoſe and would undermine us in our Work, As,

1. Thoſe who vilifie our Office and deride our Inſtructions, *viz.* Atheiſtical, Profane and Impudent Men; and ſuch there are here and there in the World: it ſtands us therefore in hand to be diligent in all ſeaſonable applications to our people, that by good Antidotes we might preſerve them from the Infection of ſuch Men, and that *Evil Communication* might not *corrupt their good manners.*

2. We are oppoſed too by *Heretical* and *Schiſmatical* Seducers, who corrupt and divide the Church, and would lead them aſtray, that are under our care; and we had need look to our Flocks when Wolves are abroad. Our Lord cautions all his

his Followers againſt *Falſe-Prophets that come in Sheeps Cloathing, but inwardly are ravening Wolves:* Math. 7. 15. and now we ſhould be diligent Watchmen againſt them for the preſervation of our Flocks. For this reaſon partly the Apoſtle exhorts the *Aſian* Paſtors to take pains with their people, *Take heed* (ſays he) *to the Flock, to feed the Church of God, for I know this, that after my departing, ſhall grievous Wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the Flock.* Acts 20. 29. And it would be greatly for the intereſt and advantage of of this beſt of Churches, did we all in our reſpective Charges uſe a diligence againſt Schiſm and Error proportionable to theirs, who oppoſe our Miniſtry, and *lye in wait to deceive*, eſpecially ſince ſo many ariſe in this Land, *ſpeaking perverſe things to draw away Diſciples after them*; Crafty Deceivers, as were the *Phariſes* of old, are often very induſtrious in making Proſelytes: but its pity the Adverſaries of the Truth ſhould beſtir themſelves more than its Friends; it is not fit that we ſhould be leſs induſtrious in ſaving, than others are in perverting Souls, and that our negligence in the right way ſhould ſtand condemned by the diligence of Seducers.

Wherefore let us *cum ſanguine & ſudore, contend earneſtly for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, and be wholly in the Miniſtry, ſince we have the oppoſition of Earth and Hell in our Work; For in this ſence *we wreſtle both againſt Fleſh and Bloud, and againſt Principalities and Powers*, in as much as we have to do with men and Devils, with the viſible and inviſible Enemies of the Church, of the Truth, of Religion and Mens Souls.

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4. Another Motive to be wholly intent on the Miniſtry, is *the happy ſucceſs in the ſame, which ſuch a Diligence gives a good proſpect of*, and infinitely more to be deſired and endeavour'd after; and of more glorious conſequence is a ſucceſs in our work, than in any other concern in the World. I need not tell you, that as Diligence in all difficult undertakings is the likely way to ſucceed, ſo the more induſtrious we are in our great ſpiritual Work, we ſhall do the more good upon thoſe who are our Charge in all likelyhood; but this I ſay, that as Diligence in us of it ſelf naturally tends to make us ſucceſsful in our Miniſtry, ſo doth the obſervation of it, when it is taken notice of by them, who are commited to our care.

Two things in Miniſters have a mighty influence upon the Obſervers that are about them, *viz. Deligence in their Calling*, and *Exemplarineſs in their Lives*, becauſe theſe things, when ſeen in us, will make our people perſwaded concerning us, that we are ſincere and in earneſt. I am to ſpeak now of the former only. If it canbe perceived that we are indifferent and liſtleſs at our Work, it is not to be expected that others ſhould be greatly affected by what we do; nor is it likely that people ſhould be awakened and quickned by the exerciſes of our Miniſtry towards them, if they ſhall be able to mark, that we little mind the buſineſs of it our ſelves. But if *we faint not in the Miniſtry we have received*, then we *commend our ſelves to every Mans Conſcience*, as Perſons that *have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty*, and we *approve our ſelves the Miniſters of God*; if thoſe who are under our care and inſpection can be Witneſſes

neſſes of our unwearied care and pains in our Sacred Truſt, then it will ſufficiently appear to them, that we *preach not our ſelves* that we are *their Servants*, not for lucre's ſake, or this World's ſake, but for *Jeſus ſake*, and their own Soul's ſake; and conſequently diligence in Miniſters is the way to be ſucceſsful in their Work, ſeeing it is a lively motive with the people that obſerve it; to ſubmit to their Doctrines, and to be guided and governed by them.

But let me not forget to add alſo the likelyhood of ſucceſs from the bleſſing of God in this caſe; for while *Paul planteth, and* Apollos *watereth*, God *gives the encreaſe*, he has an hand in the work we do, and the ſucceſs of our labours is to be attributed to Him: Now God's Bleſſing will go along with Diligence in his own Work; when God ſees us heartily ſetting our ſelves to do our utmoſt, he will put himſelf forth the more, to encourage our labours by Crowning them with ſucceſs. Give we then our ſelves wholly to the Work of the Miniſtry, if we be deſirous of ſucceſs in it; for toward this, Diligence it ſelf is very helpful, and moreover it has no ſmall Influence upon our people when they ſee it in us; and finally it drives down a greater Divine Bleſſing upon our Work, which ſeveral in our Flocks may find the great benefit of, to our ſatisfaction and joy. Which is the fourth Argument. 1 Cor. 3. 6.

The Fifth is, The conſideration of *the Dignity of our Function in regard of the relation we ſtand in towards God*, as Perſons called and miſſioned by him, ſeparated from other men, and taken nearer

to

to himſelf, to miniſter unto him in Sacred things;
2 Tim. 2. 24. for we are ſtiled in Sripture *the Servants of the Lord*, (*i. e.*) his ſpecial ſelect Servants, whom he intruſts with his Affairs and Buſineſs, and ſends out upon
1 Tim. 6. 11. his Work, *Men of God*, *Stewards of his Myſteries*,
1 Cor. 4. 1. *Miniſters of Chriſt*, *Embaſſadours for Chriſt*, Συνεργοὶ
2 Cor. 5. 20. Θεῦ, *Workers together with God*, and we are ſaid to
1 Cor. 3. 9. be conſecrated by the Holy Ghoſt to our Work; and St. *Paul* inſiſts upon this as a reaſon for Care and Diligence therein, *Take heed to your ſelves, and*
Acts 20. 28. *to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers*, and ſuch he hath made us Presbyters in our Pariſhes in ſubordination to the Biſhop, who is to overſee the Overſeers of the ſeveral parts of his Flock.

Now who would be careleſs or negligent in ſo Honourable a Truſt and Office, in the ſervice of ſo Great and Good a Maſter, and in tranſacting the buſineſs of ſo high a Miſſion and Legation? God has honoured us by that Service, which he has committed to us, ſhould we not then ſerve him with all our ſtrength, and addict our ſelves wholly to him, and do our beſt in every thing we put our hands to? Methinks as often as we mind our ſelves what we are in our places and Function, *viz.* that we are Agents for God, and related to him as his Miniſters, Stewards, Embaſſadours, and that we are Sacred Perſons appointed and ordained to ſet forth his Glory, we ſhould be diſpoſed and quickned with ſome holy *Fervency of Spirit* to be doing him the beſt ſervice we can: Let us then *walk worthy* of the Dignity *of the Vocation whereunto we are called.*

We

We would maintain and keep up the Honour of the Function, and indeed St. *Paul* would have *no man deſpiſe us*, and well is it, if we be as diligent in our places, as deſirous of that eſteem which our Holy Office challenges. But do we conſider the Miniſtry as an Office of Work as well as Dignity? And is the Honour of our Function with us, what it ought to be, a Prevailing Motive to do the Work that belongs to it? If it be not, then in ſeeking and contending for that reſpect which is due to us, becauſe we are diſtinguiſhed from the People, we do but condemn our ſelves; for if ſuch be the Dignity of our Calling and Profeſſion, becauſe we are Κλῆρος Θεοῦ, and do belong to God, ſhould we not for that reaſon ſerve him more and better?

I think there is not a little in this Argument to perſuade us to *give all diligence* in Miniſterial Duties, but there is more yet in the next that follows.

In the Sixth place, which is, *the great account we muſt one day make to God*; Negligence in us is of fearful and fatal conſequence. The Author to the *Hebrews* requires Lay-Men's Obedience to their Spiritual Governours and Paſtors, becauſe they are thoſe, who muſt be accountable for their Souls, *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch for your Souls as they that muſt give an Account*; and now the ſame thing which is a reaſon for People's ſubmiſſive regard to our Work, is a reaſon for our vigilance and painfulneſs in it. An important work we have to do, and ſhould dread the conſequence of neglect in our great Truſts and Charges, ſince the Salvation Heb. 13. 17.

of others is our weighty Concern, and we are to ſeek and endeavour it for our own ſakes as well as theirs; for their miſcarrying is chargeable on us, and lies at our door, *and their blood will be required at our hands*, ſo far forth as it is to be attributed to a want of Paſtoral Care on our Parts. Oh! for this reaſon let us make the Miniſtry our buſineſs according to the Text, and let us be awake and look about us, and keep cloſe to our Work, when we undertake what we call a *Cure of Souls*.

To quicken us to this Diligence we have a Viſiter here, and indeed fit it is, that thoſe *of us* who are not affected ſo as we ought by Terrors more at a diſtance, nor put into great concern by the thought of another World, ſhould be awakened and admoniſhed by a nearer *Viſitation* here: In the mean while this grave Aſſembly called by our Eccleſiaſtical Governour, prefigures and is an Emblem of that final, and much more ſolemn and ſevere Viſitation, to which the great Archbiſhop of the Chriſtian Church will ſummon us all at laſt. And whereas our preſent *Overſeer* with his utmoſt Epiſcopal care may not prove able to inſpect the negligence of every one of us, our Future Viſiter is our conſtant Witneſs at preſent, and ſees and knows what we do in our Function; He, I ſay, who will firſt viſit us at death, and then will afterward call us together to make our publick appearance. We ſhould therefore be diligent in our Work, and in diſcharging our Truſt, leaſt when he comes he *ſhould not find us ſuch, as he would, and we be found unto him ſuch as we would not. Why ſtand ye here all the day idle*, was a gentle reprehenſion of thoſe,

Mat. 20. 6.

who

who were *found ſtanding in the Market place, no man having hired them*, as it is in the Parable; but if after the Houſeholder had ſent them to work in his *Vineyard* he had found them idling there too, they had met with a ſharper rebuke. And let us conſider ſeriouſly thoſe dreadful Words of our Lord, *Caſt ye the unprofitable Servant into outward Darkneſs.* The *Servant* there was one that had a Truſt and Charge committed to him, and did no good in it. Math. 25. 30

Now (my Reverend Brethren) we have not much time to work in at moſt, and we know not at what hour, or how ſoon our Lord doth come; and for that reaſon it ſhould be our conſtant care, that at all times we may be taken by him diligently acting in his Service, and wholly at that work, for which he had appointed us. *Bleſſed is that Servant whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing*; Which brings me to the

Laſt Motive, and that is, Their great Rewar who ſhall be found at laſt to have been diligen *Labourers in Gods Vineyard*; Here there is no con ſtant Reward of ſuch Diligence; in ſecular labou and induſtry it holds moſtly true, that the *diligen hand makes rich*, but not ſo, in the *Labour in the Lord*; he has not ordinarily moſt of the good things of this Life, who doth moſt in the Sacred Work; and 'tis no great matter, for (bleſſed be God) we labour in the Faith and Hope of an infinitely better Reward; *A Prophets Reward* our Saviour ſeems to ſpeak of as ſomething more than ordinary, and a greater degree of Bliſs and Happineſs, and St. *Chryſoſtom* gives us this account of it, 'A good Lay Man, ſays he, is rewarded for the Hom. on Mat. 25.

'good

'good he doth himſelf, a good Miniſter for the 'goodneſs of thoſe who are about him too; for as in 'caſe Vice and Wickedneſs be not ſuppreſt through 'our neglect, we are chargeable with other folks 'Sins; ſo when by a due diligence in our Function 'we bring any to a good Life, we are rewardable 'for their Virtues: If therefore we feed our Flocks as careful and watchful Shephards, *When the chief Shephard ſhall appear, we ſhall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away*, as St. *Peter* tells us, and *Daniel's* deſcription of their Glorious Reward who labour ſucceſsfully in the Miniſtry is this, *They that turn many to Righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine as the Stars for ever and ever*; Yea, Happy and thrice Happy we, if by our diligence in the work of the Lord, *and in the Service of God in the Goſpel of his Son*, we prove the bleſſed Inſtruments of the Happineſs of other Perſons; for ſuch will be our *Glory and Joy, and Crown of rejoycing in the Preſence of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his coming.*

1 Pet. 5. 4.

Dan. 12. 3.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 1. l. 12 r. being abſent, p. 5. l. 6. r. hardineſs, l. 30. *dele* in, p. 7 l. 5. r. Secular Governments, p. 17. l. 5. r. were, p. 18. l. 31. r. Husbandman, p. 23. l. 25. r. draws.